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ABSTRACT

The Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish Speaking People supports the belief that the coordination of migrant programs requires national responsibility. The problem of providing comprehensive services to migrant farmworkers transcends state and regional boundaries and goes beyond the limits of the separate legislative authority held by administering agencies. In the past, Congressional committees, public agencies, and private businesses have conducted a number of studies on the problems which confronted migrant farmworkers. In most cases, the findings produced similar or complementary conclusions and recommendations. Specifically, these studies identified the need for strong unified direction and coordination of migrant programs by Federal, State, and local agencies. A brief overview of selected proposals or projects related to establishing a national coordinating mechanism which would be charged with administering all programs that benefit migrants and other seasonal farmworkers is presented in this paper. Covered are: two proposed national coordinating units--Special Office for Migrant and Ex-Migrant Affairs and National Migrant Council; a list of 15 programs which could provide assistance to migrant farmworkers; Experimental and Demonstration Project conducted by the Rural Manpower Service; and Michigan's program coordination experiment Brief general information on the migrant stream and the migrant condition (income, health, and education) is also given. (Author/NQ)

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CABINET COMMITTEE ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPANISH SPEAKING PEOPLE

REVIEW: National Coordination of Migrant Programs

RC008204

INTRODUCTION

The Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish Speaking People supports the belief that the coordination of migrant programs requires national responsibility. We are not alone in recognizing that the problem of providing comprehensive services to migrant farmworkers transcends state and regional boundaries and goes beyond the limits of the separate legislative authority held by administering agencies.

In the past, Congressional committees, public agencies, and private businesses have conducted a number of studies on the problems which confront the migrant farmworkers. In most cases, the findings produce similar or complementary conclusions and recommendations. Specifically, these studies identify the need for strong, unified direction and coordination of migrant programs by federal, state, and local agencies.

The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of selected proposals or projects related to establishing a national coordinating mechanism which would be charged with administering all programs that benefit migrants and other seasonal farmworkers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research findings indicate that agencies have not succeeded in coordinating their efforts to increase planning efficiency, service delivery, or maximum utilization of present resources and manpower.

Two optional plans for national coordinating units are presented below. The plans are neither new nor original. In fact, they represent a composite treatment of important recommendations made during the last two years. The reader will recognize concepts previously presented in the 1971 Report of the Cabinet Committee on Opportunities for Spanish Speaking People, Task Force on Migrant Affairs, the 1972 National Migrant Worker Program Handbook of the Department of Labor's Manpower Administration, and the 1973 General Accounting Office Report to Congress on the "Impact of Federal Programs to Improve the Living Conditions of Migrants and Other Seasonal Farmworkers."

SPECIAL OFFICE FOR MIGRANT AND EX-MIGRANT AFFAIRS

NATIONAL LEVEL

Establish by Executive Order a Special Office for Migrant and Ex-Migrant Affairs (SOMEA) with a direct relationship to the Office of Management and Budget. This office would be assigned principal responsibility for assuring maximum coordination of the resources and manpower of the various federal migrant programs on the national level.

SOMEA would be in a position to monitor all federal migrant programs; direct or reallocate resources which prove less than maximally effective. SOMEA would be responsible for coordinating year round and long-range planning for migrant and ex-migrant programs.

REGIONAL LEVEL

The Federal Regional Council would be the coordinating arm of SOMEA at the regional level. Each Regional Council would establish a Committee on Migrant and Ex-Migrant Affairs. The Committee members would come from public and private agencies, migrant farmworkers, and employers of migrant farmworkers.

The committee would inform and advise SOMEA, as well as the Regional Councils, on the problems and needs of the migrant programs at the state and local levels. The committee would also provide technical assistance to state and local coordinating bodies.

STATE LEVEL

The governor of each state which employs migrant labor would be requested to establish a coordinating body at the state level, an Interagency Committee for

Migrant Affairs. Committee membership would be composed of agency officials, migrant farmworkers, and employers of migrant farm labor. The Committee would function on behalf of agencies and organizations which provide direct services to migrant and other seasonal farmworkers.

NATIONAL MIGRANT COUNCIL

NATIONAL LEVEL

Establish a National Migrant Council under the chairmanship of the President's Counselor for Human Resources.

The membership of the National Migrant Council would include representatives of all Federal departments and agencies involved with programs which service migrants and other seasonal farmworkers.

The National Migrant Council should be authorized to develop an integrated strategy on migrant problems based on comprehensive studies of the basic social and economic problems. The council should be authorized to make recommendations for any needed legislative changes. The Council should be authorized to develop plans whereby its member agencies would share or supplement each other's resources and manpower in order to increase the efficiency in delivery of services by reducing the duplication that presently exists.

The Council should involve other federal and state agencies, private organizations and migrant farmworkers themselves in the planning and delivery stages of program operations. The Council should encourage collaboration and cooperation between these groups at the national, regional, state and local levels.

REGIONAL AND STATE LEVELS

Regional and state migrant councils would be established in each federal region or state that employs migrant and other seasonal farmworkers. Membership and responsibilities of these council would correspond with those proposed for the National Migrant Council. The councils would inform and advise the National Council on specific problems or needs of migrant workers in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

THE MIGRANT STREAM

Most migratory workers in search of agricultural work travel northward in one of three major streams originating along the southern U.S. border. According to the 1969 Report of the Senate Subcommittee on Migratory Labor "The Migratory Farm Problem in the United States," these three routes are described as follows: The main stream flows north and west from Texas, beginning in the spring and covering most of the North Central, Mountain and Pacific Coast states before the season ends around December. Most of the migrant workers in this migratory stream are English-speaking white southerners and Mexican Americans from Texas. A smaller stream draws workers from Florida and other Southeastern states for the Florida citrus and winter vegetable harvest. The migrants then work northward during the spring and summer through the Atlantic coast states, sometimes as far north as New England. Negroes and Puerto Ricans constitute a large proportion of the East Coast stream. Workers following a third major migratory route start in southern California and work northward through the Pacific Coast states. Mexican Americans constitute the greatest proportion of these migrant workers.

Essentially, there are two time and two geographic cycles in the economic life of the migratory farmworker. The instream cycle occurs during the summer months in the northern agricultural areas. The home base cycle occupies the remainder of the year in the southern and southwestern states. During the 'instream' phase of the year, migrant activity is highly mobile. It is not uncommon to find migrants who have worked in five or six different locations or states during the summer harvests. The home base cycle refers to the period of six to eight months when migrants reside in a state which they consider their permanent home area. The major home base states are California, Florida, and Texas. During the home base period, employment is almost nonexistant.

THE MIGRANT CONDITION

Income

In 1971 nearly 1.6 million persons did farm wage work only. They were employed an average of 94 days and earned $1,095. The average daily wage was about $11.95. The 1971 Manpower Report of the President reported that the combined family income averaged $3,350 a year.1

Health

The average life expectancy of the migrant is under 60; for the average U.S. citizen, it is over 70; and the mortality rate of the migrant due to tuberculosis and other infectious deseases is more than twice the national average.2

Education

Migrants and their families have an average grade level of only 8.6 years, and over 17 percent are functionally illiterate.

The main hope of poor families in breaking the poverty cycle is education of their children. That hope is tied directly to the family's economic capabilities which for the migrant are extremely impoverished.

It is readily apparent that the migrant farmworkers will continue to exist in a dire socio-economic condition while he is expressly excluded, or written out in actual practice, from almost all conventional citizen and worker benefits enacted by Federal and state law, including, unemployment insurance, social security, workmen's compensation, wage payment and collection laws and others.

In 1971, the U.S. Department of Labor's Manpower Administration identified forty-three (43) states employing migratory workers. This labor force ranged from 40 workers in New Hampshire to 65,500 workers in California. In 1971 there were 179,000 migratory workers employed at peak season. This figure does not include the dependents of migrant workers, which means that the actual number of persons in the migrant stream is considerably larger than the count provided by the Manpower Administration. The high mobility of migrants makes collection of accurate date extremely difficult. This factor causes some migrants to be counted several times, while others are never accounted for on their trek. In an effort to gather more reliable data, DOL has developed a counting system based on "man-months" worked by migrants.

1 The Hired Farm Working Force of 1971: Economic Research Service Report No. 222, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, p. 6
2 Health Services for Domestic Agricultural Workers, 1972: Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, Ninety-Second Congress, Agu. 1, 1972.

Employment opportunities for the agricultural labor force have been shrinking steadily. In recent years the sharpest rate of reduction seems to have occurred in migratory farmworkers. During the first half of the 1960's between 295,000 and 466,000 migrant farmworkers were employed on farms. By 1970, the number was down to 196,000 according to the annual Hired Farm Working Force survey. These reductions were primarily due to adoption of labor saving devices and practices in vegetable and sugar beets.

Table 1 demonstrates the rate of decline in agriculture employment for migrant farmworkers during the five year period.3

Table 1

Reduction In Migratory Labor, United States

Year	Total Migratory Labor	No. of Jobs Lost	% of Job Reduction
1967	279,000	-	-
1968	267,000	3,000	1.0
1969	257,000	19,000	7.3
1970	197,000	61,000	31.1
1971	172,000	24,000	13.9

The net result of mechanization is that the migrants' economic situation has changed from severe hardship to impending disaster. The impact of agricultural technology has drastically reduced their job opportunities. This trend will continue as other crops are added to the mechanized list.4

3 Information provided by, Economic Research Service U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4 Mechanization and the Migrants: The Farm Index; U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Je. 1971, p. 4

Table 2 shows the continued downward trend in migrant labor employment. The exceptions are Oregon, Washington and California in 1971 and North Carolina in 1972.5

Table 2

Man-Months of Migratory Labor, United States

July 1970 to November 1972, and

Corresponding Annual Change

[Numbers in thousands]

State	Man-months of migratory labor July to November			
	1972	Change 72/71	1971	Change 71/70
United States	563.5	-120.0	683.5	-37.0
California	144.8	- 42.0	186.8	+15.3
Michigan	44.3	- 10.1	54.4	-15.5
Texas	33.9	- 3.2	37.1	- 5.6
Ohio	33.2	- 2.8	35.9	- 1.0
North Carolina	33.0	+ 3.5	29.5	- 6.7
Washington	32.6	- 11.2	43.8	+ 4.5
New Jersey	29.7	- 2.8	32.6	- 0.5
New York	29.0	- 8.4	37.4	- 1.4
Oregon	14.3	- 13.3	27.6	+ 1.9
All other States	168.7	- 29.8	189.0	-24.4

NOTE: Due to roumding, figures may not add to totals.
SOURCE: In-Season Farm Labor Reports of the Manpower Administration

5 Farm Employment Trends, Rural Manpower Development, March 1972 & 1973 U.S. Department of Labor/Manpower Administration

FEDERAL MIGRANT PROGRAMS

A review of the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance summerizes fifteen (15) programs that could provide assistance to migrant farmworkers; of these fifteen, only five are specifically legislated for migrants. The fifteen programs include:

DEPARTMENT:

Agriculture

Food Distribution (Food Donation Program); FY 73 allocation $15,700,000

Food Stamps; FY 73 allocation $2,239,000,000

Farm Labor Housing Loans and Grants; FY 73 allocation $5,463,000

Department of Labor

*Migrant Worker Project (Last Yellow Bus); FY 73 allocation $18,000,000

Employment Services; FY 73 allocation $433,400,000. Specifically Rural Manpower Services, which is one of thirteen (13) services provided by Employment Services; allocation for RMS is not separately identified.

*Farm Labor Contractor Registration; FY 73 allocation not separately identified

Health, Education, and Welfare

*Migrant Health Grants; FY 73 allocation $23,750,000

*Educationally Deprived Children - Migrants; FY 73 allocation $64,822,926

Adult Education (Grants to states); FY 73 allocation, $51,134,000

Adult Education (Special Projects); FY 73 allocation $7,000,000

Bilingual Education (Title VII; FY 73 allocation $41,130,000

Educationally Deprived Children - Special Grants for Urban and Rural Schools

Vocational Education - Innovation; FY 73 allocation $8,000,000 state formula, $8,000,000 project grants/contracts

Dropout Prevention: FY 73 allocation $10,000,000

Office of Economic Opportunity

*Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Assistance (Title II-B); FY 73 allocation $35,000,000

*designates specific legislation

Coordination of these programs, and others at the national, regional, state and local levels, will be required in order to achieve maximum affect in migrant service delivery and assistance in settling-out of the migrant stream.

NATIONAL COORDINATION EXPERIMENT

The Manpower Administration funded an Experimental and Demonstration (E&D) project conducted by the Rural Manpower Service to try out new ways of helping migrants. Overall coordination was done by a project director in the RMS national office. Members of the regional RMS staffs in Chicago and Seattle were appointed to coordinate the activities of the States in their regions. In the second year, a coordinator was appointed from the Dallas regional office to work with the Texas Employment Commission. The following 10 States participated: Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin. The project focused on a small number of families who traveled in the midcontinent stream. Manpower and supportive services were provided to these families in their home base area in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas and at selected "target areas" where they worked in the nine northern States. During 1969, most of the effort was directed toward helping a pilot group of about 800 families. After interviewers in Texas ascertained what services the workers needed, other interviewers in the northern States tried to trace the families and develop these services for them. Relationships were established with other agencies and institutions to help provide the various services.

The second year's program was similar, but went further in efforts to help families settle out. The operational objectives of the 1970 plan were to (1) develop administrative processes and staff capabilities and (2) demonstrate the feasibility and value of providing various types of manpower and supportive services.

During the spring of 1970, the States prepared for action by assigning a coordinator, hiring and training staff, and establishing relationships with those agencies that would be called upon to provide supportive services. When the migrants arrived, the staff contacted the families, attempted to meet their needs for supportive services, and identified those that wanted to settle out. When the agricultural season was over, the staff worked with those who had decided to settle out, helping them to obtain whatever manpower and supportive services were needed.6

The E&D project's experience in regard to interagency coordination and supportive services showed that nearly all of the projects's families, whether they planned to settle out or not, needed various types of supportive services. This included medical, dental, legal, welfare, food stamps, child care, and other services. As indicated by the Oregon E&D project report the provision of these services was dependent on other agencies. "Without the active support from other agencies the E&D Project would have had very little experimentation and less demonstration. To be sure, the E&D Project served as a catalyst, coordinator, and facilitator, but the actual services were, to a considerable extent, the direct result of active participation by other agencies on behalf of E&D families.7

6 New Ways of Helping Migrants, Rural Manpower Developments, March 1972, U.S. Department of Labor/Manpower Administration
7 Ibid

To help local staffs in forming these relationships, coordinators at the State, regional and national level made contacts with officials at the higher echelons of those service agencies whose help was needed. Frequently, these contacts were a continuation of working relationships that have developed over a long period of time. In several states, an interagency task force on migrant affairs had been appointed by the Governor, and the State Director of Farm Labor (or Rural Manpower) represented the State Employment Security Agency on this task force.

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STATE COORDINATION EXPERIMENT

The CCOSSP's staff was privileged to observe and participate in an effort of program coordination at a state and local level. This effort in program coordination began in 1968, and is an ongoing process today, in the state of Michigan.

While the community and state officials will readily admit that much more needs to be done before effective coordination is achieved; it must be recognized that Michigan has taken some very significant steps in program coordination.

The following is the Chronology of Michigan's action toward program coordination.

I. Early in 1968 a group of community people and state officials met to discuss the problem of service delivery to migrant farmworkers. The disucssion centered on gaps in service delivery, duplication of efforts, lack of bilingual-bicultural staff in state agencies and the need for interagency coordination.

The participants concluded that a collective influence needed to be exerted to "Establish a research and development task force in a specific geographic site and/or sites (to be selected after due study) to require manpower linkage between the Agricultural Labor Commission and the following agencies: Department of Public Health, Employment Security Commission, Department of Labor, Department of Social Services, Department of Education, Rural Manpower Center (MSU), Civil Rights Commission, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other suitable agencies." Included in this effort was the need to establish this project administratively by the Governor's office with personnel and monies earmarked by each agency to the total program. Further that the program direction should be the responsibility of an executive appointed by the Governor and directly responsible to the Governor for meeting program goals.

II. The 1968 Migrant Research Program and the Public Hearing conducted by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission proved the obvious, and included the concept and need for interagency cooperation and coordination in its recommendation.

III. The following year, 1969, Governor William Milliken convened a Task Force on Migrant Labor, under the direction of Dr. John Dempsey, Director of Budget and Evaluation. The Task Force was composed of Executive Directors from those agencies who had responsibilities in migrant programs.

The Task Force develcped eighteen recommendations; those dealing with program coordination included.

- That the Governor direct the head of each appropriate department or agency dealing with migrants to formally designate one individual who would be particularly responsible for departmental activity concerning migrants and ex-migrants. (The designees became known as the Interagency Committee on Migrant Affairs, (ICMA). The ICMA has a membership of thirteen agencies.

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- That the Governor assign a member of his principal executive staff a special superintending responsibility for all state programs concerning migrants or former migrants. (Dr. Dempsey, who had served as Chairman of the Civil Rights Commission and Chaired the Public Hearings on Migrants, was assigned to this responsibility).

- The establishment in each county, or combination of contiguous counties; where migrant labor is employed of an interagency task force or area council consisting of representatives of all the agencies dealing with migrants, representatives of agriculture and related employers, as well as representatives of migrants; designed to make certain that maximum service and maximum efficiency in service delivery results in those jurisdictions. The Michigan Office of Economic Opportunity should be the initiating agency. (Mr. Alton Shiptsead, Executive Director for MEOO, reported directly to Dr. Dempsey. The Community Action Agencies were utilized in establishing 23 Migrant Area Councils throughout the state.)

IV. 1970 was the year of construction, establishing the Migrant Area Councils and setting up the machinery for the operation of the Interagency Committee on Migrant Affairs.

The progress during 1970 was difficult to measure, even though it was a critical stage of development since it was a period of promoting sound human relations and spirit of working together. It was a time to identify mutual problems, to work out differences, and to exchange information and points of view. In July of 1970, a Confernece for Area Councils on Migrant Affairs was held on the campus of Michigan State University. The purpose of the conference was to allow members of the Area Councils to prepare recommendations on problems encountered at the local operations. These recommendations were presented to the Governor for his consideration. Consequently, they became the directives for the Interagency Committee on Migrant Affairs.

The recommendations were in the areas of administration, staff and service outreach coordination, housing, transition/settling-out, interstate cooperation, wages, and emergency cases.

V. The 1971 harvest season developed several crises to test the viability of the Interagency Committee on Migrant Affairs. Having the assistance of Dr. Dempsey, who had direct communication with the Governor, was a tremendous asset to the Interagency Committee's ability in dealing with the problem. Dr. Dempsey's presence assured the participation of key departments Executive Directors for prompt decision making.

However, the size of the Committee membership proved too cumbersome in the decision making process. Dr. Dempsey's position proved invaluable by providing the necessary leadership in developing and approving alternate modes of operation.

Task Forces of three or four persons from key agencies were set up to handle specific problems. They made investigations and recommendations for consideration and decision making by Dr. Dempsey and the Executive Directors whose agencies had direct responsibility in a particular problem area.

Hence forth the Task Forces have become the mode of operation. The Interagency Committee now meets on a periodic basis for general consideration of recommendations on policy; for reporting on program plans for the next harvest season and other general concerns.

VI. Michigan reports that the 1972 harvest season produced greater interagency and community cooperation and coordination. While a great deal of work lies ahead it appears that the process of solving migrant problems has been, or will be institutionalized in the very near future.

The coordination effort in Michigan provides optimistic evidence that coordination and cooperation is indeed possible. What has happened in Michigan is that the activities by the community, government agencies and the Executive Office have reinforce each other in focusing attention on the problem and in taking important initial steps in coming to grips with the complex problem of coordination in providing services to a highly mobile population.

What became obvious in the Michigan experience in coordination was that in dealing with the migrant problem there was a need to encompass a broader and broader jurisdiction; i.e., to resolve the problems of coordinating across lines of jurisdiction. Even after the successful effort in coordinating the interstate structures, it was evident that the scope and responsibility of the problem reached beyond the boundaries of Michigan.